Mr. CUSHING's

DISCOURSE,

Occasioned by the Death of

The REVEREND MR. JACKSON.

A

DISCOURSE,

OCCASIONED

BY THE DEATH

OF THE

REVEREND MR. JOSEPH JACKSON,

Late PASTOR of the CHURCH in BROOKLINE,

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE JULY 22, 1796,
ÆTATIS 62.

Delivered at his Interment,

JULY 25, 1796.

BY JACOB CUSHING, *A. M.*
PASTOR of the CHURCH in WALTHAM.

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A FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

LUKE xii. 35, 36, 37.

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning:

And ye yourſelves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find watching.

THE evident deſign of this paſſage, is to quicken us to a timely and ſerious preparation for the ſolemn ſcenes of death and judgment. We are here reminded, that *we* are *ſervants*, and have a *maſter* in Heaven, of whoſe deſcent we are aſcertained, but are altogether ignorant of the day or hour of his coming; therefore, it is both our duty and intereſt to be always vigilant, and ready to receive him. Being thus found, he will treat

treat us not as ſervants, but embrace us as friends, and beſtow upon us a reward infinite in degree and duration.

We have, in the text, a conciſe, but comprehenſive account of the chriſtian's and chriſtian miniſter's labor and recompence: Our duty and encouragement are both held up to view.

Our duty is repreſented by the diligent care of ſervants to have every thing adjuſted for the reception of their abſent maſter. Our Saviour, in alluſion to the cuſtom of *Jews*, and other eaſtern nations, in wearing long and looſe garments, ſays, *Let your loins be girded about*; as if he had ſaid, Lay aſide every thing that may retard you in your work: Let your lights be invariably burning, and *ye yourſelves*, in every other reſpect, like ſervants, who are ſolicitous to pleaſe their Lord, and to be found attentive to their proper buſineſs, at whatever hour he ſhall appear; that when he knocketh, you may be ready to give him inſtant admittance, and not be thrown into confuſion.

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THE ſubſequent reward is deſcribed in the like allegorical manner: When their maſter returns, and finds them thus employed, he will confer upon them ſome ſignal marks of approbation and honor.

I. LET us turn our attention to the duty we owe to our *abſent Lord.* And,

II. GIVE an explanation of the motives ſuggeſted, to induce us to the diſcharge of it.

I. WE are to turn our attention to the duty we owe to our abſent Lord. *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourſelves like unto men that wait for their Lord.* By this figurative deſcription, many important parts, or branches of the chriſtian and miniſterial duty are plainly pointed out.

WE are directed to throw off all incumbrances in the ſervice of our Lord and Maſter. *Let your loins be girded about.* So an Apoſtle exhorts. *Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be ſober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you, at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.*

WE

We have many exhortations, in the New-Teſtament, of like import, which will appear to have a peculiar propriety, if we take into view, thoſe figurative repreſentations of our work to which they are applicable. It is called a race—a ſtrife—a warfare;—we muſt run, wreſtle and fight—therefore have need of all our ſtrength and agility. It is of importance to realize our ſituation: To advert to the difficulties of our warfare. View the greatneſs of our work—conſider the number of our adverſaries—contemplate that large ſyſtem of duties we have to perform; and then we ſhall find that the moſt vigorous exertion of every active power is no more than needful, in ſuch circumſtances as ours. We muſt then labor to be rid of every incumbrance, and be awake for active ſervice.

Need I ſay, what theſe incumbrances are?—In general, whatever unfits us for duty, muſt be laid aſide. Particularly, an earthly mind—pride of heart—and the love of ſenſual pleaſures, are powerful enemies to holy diligence in the work of

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the Lord. In a word, our firſt care ſhould be to correct that diſorder which is within us; to get our hearts purified by the Spirit of God, and raiſed above the prevailing influence and government of earthly objects.

We muſt alſo have our *lights burning*. This may imply the care we ſhould take to have our minds furniſhed with the knowledge of our duty: For we neither can be good chriſtians, or uſeful miniſters, without a competent knowledge of that divine law which is the only infallible rule of our conduct. Taking the words in this ſenſe, they teach us a moſt important leſſon, that we ſhould labor with a humble and ſincere temper of mind, to know what is the good and acceptable will of God. This is the beſt preparation for the coming of our Lord. To have ſuch a *repentance* as ſhall lead us to mourn over our paſt ſins, and to keep the heart humble under a ſenſe of guilt; —our *faith*, applying to the blood of Jeſus for pardon, and, at the ſame time, deriving ſtrength from above for ſubduing

our luſts, that ſin may no more have the dominion over us ;—our *love*, embracing an unſeen Saviour, and extending to all his members ;—our *hope*, anchoring within the vail, and keeping the ſoul eſtabliſhed amidſt all the changes of this mutable ſtate—our *patience* triumphing over ſufferings ;—our *meekneſs* paſſing by injuries, bleſſing and doing good to our moſt implacable enemies ;—and by the united, happy influence of *all theſe*, the *light* of our external conduct adorning our profeſſion, and engaging others to glorify our Father who is in Heaven. This is to have our *lights burning* indeed ; this will make us ready to meet our Lord. And this is the preparation we ought principally to ſtudy. In vain do we trim the lamp, if it do not ſhine, and give light ; in vain are our loins girded about, if we neglect the proper buſineſs of our calling.

As another intereſting leſſon, we are directed to be on our guard, or to *watch* till our maſter *comes*. Watchfulneſs is frequently, in ſcripture, oppoſed to ſleep : And that even the beſt chriſtians have need

need of this caution, we may learn from our Saviour's parable of the ten virgins: Who all, *wiſe* as well as *fooliſh*, ſlumbered and ſlept. This, *my Brethren*, is a melancholy ſituation, againſt which we ſhould carefully guard. We read of ſome, who loſt their *firſt love*; nay, *St. Paul* complains of the *Hebrews*, that they had loſt their former knowledge; and had need to be taught again which are the firſt principles of the oracles of God. So it may prove with us, and upon this account it becomes neceſſary that we ſhould watch. We have much work to do, and but a limited day for the performance of it. Let us be awake then to our buſineſs. Let us labor while the day laſts, and like the Apoſtle *Paul*, *forgetting the things that are behind*, let us reach forth unto *thoſe which are before*, *preſſing forward towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jeſus Chriſt.*

We add,

Our Lord directs us to conſider ourſelves as fellow-ſervants, and members of his family; and in this point of light, another part of our preparation for his coming,

coming, muſt lie in the performance of thoſe duties we owe to each other. It appears from ſome verſes in the latter part of the chapter before us, that the faithful diſcharge of ſocial duties, has a higher rank in religion than many ſeem to ſuppoſe. It is not, be ſure, the whole of religion, neither can it be called the moſt eſſential part of it. We were the ſubjects of God before we became members of human ſociety; and if we prove unfaithful to God, it cannot avail us that we are not unjuſt towards men. He only acts worthy of the chriſtian name, and agreeable to the chriſtian and miniſterial character, who fulfils all the duties of his calling and ſtation—who fears and loves his Maker—who believes and obeys his Saviour, and does unto others what he expects and deſires of them.

II. I SHALL attempt a brief explanation of the motives ſuggeſted, to perſuade us to the duty of *watchfulneſs*.

ONE principal argument may be drawn from the *certainty* of our Lord's return. This is ſo often aſſerted in the Bible, that there

there can be no doubt of it. The preſent mixed ſtate of things renders a future judgment not only probable to reaſon, but apparently neceſſary. And the Apoſtle to the *Romans*, chap. 8th, derives a ſolid argument in favor of this doctrine, from the preſent burthened ſtate of mankind. And this is what the goſpel of Chriſt repeatedly aſſerts. Should not this then oblige us to make ready for it? We ſhall ſee our Redeemer, but how ſhall we look up to him, if we have been unfaithful during his abſence; or lived as if no one had dominion over us? The recollection, that he is now removed from us, ſhould work upon our ingenuity, and excite us to the utmoſt care and diligence in his ſervice.

THE *uncertainty of the time* when our Lord will come, may be ſuggeſted as another reaſon why we ſhould endeavour to be in readineſs. This argument is much inſiſted upon by our bleſſed Lord. He often likens his coming to that of a thief in the night, who ſtudies ſecrecy. And this ſeems to be the meaning of that alluſion, where

where he likens himſelf to one who is attending a marriage ſolemnity; becauſe on ſuch occaſions people uſually are not maſters of their own time; which renders the *hour* of their return to their own houſes, uncertain. This being the caſe, there cannot be a more powerful motive to an habitual preparation. *Behold*, ſays our Lord, *I come as a thief——Bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame.* And if all is thus uncertain, how great is the danger of omitting that, which perhaps we may never have time to finiſh? This motive will receive additional force, if we conſider,

That when our Lord and Maſter returns, our working ſeaſon will ceaſe. He comes to judge us according to what we have done, and not to call us to perfect unfiniſhed labors. This, *my Brethren and Friends*, is a moſt weighty conſideration. We are now acting for futurity: And ſhall hereafter receive according to our conduct in life.

The glorious *reward* laid up for the faithful, is the laſt motive I ſhall name,

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to animate and quicken us in our preparation. This is ſpoken of in the laſt verſe of our text, as what will aſſuredly be conferred on the righteous. This is a reward not of debt, but of grace. Thoſe who are found faithful, ſhall be advanced to an honor, which, were it not promiſed, they could not properly hope for. Here we are in heavineſs, through manifold trials—having no certain dwelling-place—are travelling with weary ſteps, and frequent loſſes and diſappointments in our way to the better country. But in Heaven, we ſhall be joined to the ranſomed of the Lord, who unceaſingly adore and praiſe him who ſitteth on the throne, and the Lamb. Glorious ſociety! Delightful entertainment! It is prepared for all thoſe that love God. It will be given to all that continue faithful unto death. What more can we wiſh, to animate us to be in a ſtate of readineſs for the approach of our Lord, at any period of our lives?

In a review of our ſubject, we may pertinently remark, that our ſituation here

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is very precarious. Nothing can be more uncertain than the life of man upon earth. Death is the certain condition of our birth: And this awaits us through every period of life. What nature and obſervation thus point out as certain and inevitable, the providence of God is daily confirming. An affecting inſtance of this, now preſents itſelf to view, in the ſudden death of the worthy, beloved paſtor of this *church* and *chriſtian ſociety*, whoſe funeral ſolemnities we are now attending.

It is, doubtleſs, expected that before I conclude, I ſhould take particular notice of the affecting occaſion, which gave riſe to the preceding diſcourſe. I freely acknowledge, I am not diſinclined, however unequal to the attempt, to do honor and juſtice, as far as I am able, to the memory of one ſo well accompliſhed as your late paſtor is known to have been.

The great Parent of man, and the Supreme Diſpoſer of all, was pleaſed, in his diſcriminating goodneſs, to favor Mr. *Jackson* with ſhining mental powers, which, under the advantages of a collegiate

glate education,* were much enlarged. Few, perhaps, ſurpaſſed him, either in the quickneſs of his apprehenſion, the clearneſs of his perception, the ſtrength of his memory, the comprehenſion of his underſtanding, or the ſoundneſs of his judgment. And, together with theſe gifts of God, he was endued with talents which qualified him for the important work of the goſpel miniſtry, and made him a *burning and ſhining light* in this part of God's vineyard—*whoſe praiſe is in all our churches.*

He ever ſuſtained a fair moral character, worthy imitation; his regularity and uniform punctuality were remarkable traits in it. Thoſe well acquainted with him, muſt have ſeen his amiable deportment in the ſeveral relations of life—as a faithful, tender huſband—an affectionate father—a juſt and equal maſter—as a friend,

* Mr. Jackson received the public honors of Harvard College (now the univerſity), in *Cambridge*, in 1753 and 1756. He was reſident graduate *there* ſome time; commenced preacher of the goſpel, and ſoon after was choſen tutor, which office he ſuſtained, with reputation, till he was invited, by the church and congregation in *Brookline*, to ſettle in the work of the miniſtry.

friend, true to his profeſſions, ſafely to be confided in :—As a miniſter, diligent, laborious, ſkilful—aiming, in his diſcourſes, to inform the mind, affect the heart, and regulate the conduct. Few compoſed their ſermons with ſo much eaſe, and yet ſo pertinently ; he was a ſcriptural, intelligent and edifying preacher ;. and judiciouſly noticed the diſpenſations of providence, for the inſtruction and benefit of his hearers. Above all, he was a man of piety and true devotion, a ſincere diſciple and ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt.

Should I appeal to you, the beloved people of his charge, you would all, I am confident, riſe up, and declare *his* approbation and practice of the things that were *honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely, and of good report. Ye are witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably he behaved himſelf among you that believe.* You would further ſay, that he had been to you *an example in word, in converſation, in charity, in faith, in purity ;* and in all the virtues which adorn the chriſtian and miniſterial character. Not that he was without failings and imperfections.

fections. I am ſenſible, he had them, and he knew it alſo; and every one elſe knows that he has many infirmities, who properly knows himſelf. But he was uniformly ſteady in his regards to the religion of Jeſus; and had his dependence on the mercy of God, through the mediation of Chriſt, the only Saviour. So he lived; and, with the hopes which the goſpel inſpires, he quitted the ſtage of labors and trials; and is receiving a glorious reward in the higheſt Heavens.

Under a firm perſuaſion hereof, his mourning relatives may derive conſolation, though they are in great heavineſs. We are, with you, afflicted; and wiſh you the ſupports of God's ſpirit and grace.

It is, in particular, our hearts' deſire, that the amiable conſort, now a widow and deſolate by the death of an affectionate huſband, may be comforted of God in this her day of trouble and diſtreſs. Nature demands a tear, nor does religion forbid it, unleſs it be exceſſive. You cannot be faulty, ſhould the paſſion of grief riſe, and vent itſelf in tears, upon the departure

parture of him who was *the deſire of your eyes*, with whom you ſo long *lived together, as heirs of the grace of life*. Only be cautious that you find no fault with your Maker, for dealing thus ſeverely with you. You are diſpoſed, I believe, and upon the principles of the chriſtian religion, rather to ſubmit patiently to the all-wiſe government of God, than to diſpute his pleaſure. May you be enabled ſuitably to caſt this burden upon the Lord! And may you find his *everlaſting arms underneath* to ſupport you! May that Almighty Being, who has ſtyled himſelf the *widow's God*, pity your diſtreſſed caſe, and ſend you help and comfort *from his holy dwelling-place!*

To the only ſurviving daughter, and other connexions, we ſincerely wiſh divine inſtructions, ſupports, and conſolations, that they may, in this day of painful affliction and bereavement, glorify the God of their fathers, adorn their chriſtian character, and be watching and waiting for the coming of their Lord. Thus, having their fruit unto holineſs, their end will be everlaſting life.

THIS

THIS *beloved church* and *christian society*, will consider the sudden death of their pastor as under the over-ruling providence of God. Let this thought compose you to silence and submission. What God has done is the effect of infinite wisdom. Adore his sovereignty, and quietly bear this divine chastisement, whereby you are deprived of a valuable, tried friend. For more than thirty years* have our *christian friends* in this town enjoyed his light and labors, till the last week; but you shall see him no more, in the land of the living.

YOU are now as sheep without a shepherd; it is our fervent prayer, that you may not be scattered; but that you may keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; that, in due time, the *God of the spirits of all flesh* would direct and lead you into the choice of another pastor, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding, and long live to be a blessing to you, and to your posterity.

MY

* He was ordained April 9, 1760. Thirty-six years and some months he diligently labored in the work of the Lord; and his usefulness continued as long as life.

My *Brethren* in the miniſtry will recollect, on this ſolemn occaſion, that we are ſtewards, of whom an account will be ſoon, perhaps ſuddenly required. Our work is great and arduous, but a glorious reward awaits the faithful watchman ;— *Bleſſed is that ſervant.* Let this animate us to diligence and perſeverance, for the Lord is at hand ! And may his arm be with us, to ſtrengthen, encourage, and ſucceed us, that we may *both ſave our own ſouls, and*, inſtrumentally, *them that hear us !*

I ONLY add, Should any in this aſſembly go away from this ſolemn ſcene, without having our minds deeply impreſſed, it muſt be becauſe we are quite ſtupid and inattentive. Shall good and uſeful men, the faithful ſervants, and ſtewards of God's houſe, one after another, and other worthy characters, be ſuddenly dropping into death and darkneſs, and ſurvivors not lay it to heart ? Behold, in the inſtance before us, the ſtate to which death will reduce us all ! Let us then *watch*, pray and labor, while we have opportunity, and make our peace with God, through

through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Let us anticipate the recompence of reward, and the glorious appearance of Jeſus Chriſt, at his ſecond coming, when *he ſhall be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them that believe.*

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through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us anticipate the recompence of reward, and the glorious appearance of Jesus Christ, at his second coming, when he shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.